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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FOOD AND DRUG SUPPLIES -- No. 31

December 1, 1930

A radio talk by W. R. M. Wharton, Chief of the Eastern District, Federal Food and Drug Administration, delivered Monday mornings at 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, through station WJZ, New York, and associated National Broadcasting Company stations.

Good morning, my radio friends, I am, as you well know by this time, your Government representative telling you each week at this hour how your foods and drugs are safeguarded by the enforcement of the Federal Food and Drugs Act, and telling you how to read food and drug labels, in order that you may secure full value and exactly the article you desire when you make your purchases.

My story today is about apples. Some time ago when your Government representative was working in the central west he undertook to investigate to determine whether there were then existing in that section any practices in the marketing of apples which were of a fraudulent nature or which violated the terms of the Federal Food and Drugs Act. In the main, the investigations showed that the apple industry was on the level, but your inspector found one shipper of apples who seemed to be not only imposing upon and defrauding consumers, but also violating the Federal Food and Drugs Act. After carefully laid plans matured, an interstate shipment of apples made by this individual was discovered. These apples were packed in barrels and the barrels were labeled with the name, Winesap, the name of a variety of apples. The apples in the barrels were carefully examined. Now let me tell you the amazing story of what the results of this examination showed. One barrel was divided by the examiner into three lots according to size and then the apples in these several lots were counted and weighed. We will call the three lots, small, medium and large for our purposes, although these descriptions are not accurate as fitting the apples with which we are dealing. Now, in this barrel there were 914 of what we are calling the small apples, there were 1,158 of what we have named medium apples, and there were 312 of so-called large size apples. Now let's go back: there were 914 small apples in the single barrel. These, when weighed, averaged 30 to the pound. This means that each apple averaged only slightly over one-half ounce. Some of the smallest apples were picked out of the lot and weighed and it required 21 of these to weigh one-half pound. The average weight of these then was only slightly over 1/3 ounce each. Now, imagine an apple of such a small size as to weigh only 1/3

ounce. None of these apples were larger than a small filbert. They were all too small to be fit for any edible purposes. Now, let's take the so-called medium apples in this barrel. There were 1,158 of them which averaged 15 to the pound. These were too small to be fit for edible purposes. Now we have, of the 2,384 apples in the barrel, 2,072 were so small as not to be suitable for any food purposes. This left 312 apples, and these averaged 9 to the pound. Even these were small apples, they were too poor to rank even as culls, and by the way, these large apples that we are talking about were on the face of the barrel, the small ones were all covered up underneath. Do you get the idea, my friends--- nearly 90% of the apples in this barrel were so small as to be worthless. It was quite amusing when we were examining them, for we found many apples in the barrel which were so small that we referred to them as blossoms. Now, this is not all that was the matter with this lot of apples. I have already told you that they were labeled Winesaps. Examination showed that they were not Winesaps at all. - Instead they were really another and inferior variety, namely, York Imperial.

I do not believe there has ever been a parallel to this situation. I do not believe that any other shipper of apples ever attempted to market a product such as this. Well, these goods were shipped in interstate commerce. They were misbranded and adulterated under the terms of the Food and Drugs Act.- Misbranded because labeled Winesap when they were not.- adulterated in that a worthless article had been substituted for apples, and so a criminal information was filed against the shipper for violating the Food and Drugs Act, and the case was brought in the Federal court for trial, and here is the sad, sad part of this story, my friends. The Government brought its evidence before the court and jury with statements similar to those that I have made to you in this recitation and yet, notwithstanding the indisputable facts, the jury returned a verdict of 'not guilty'.-- However, my friends, the shipper of these apples had learned his lesson. Subsequent investigations showed that he never again attempted to market such apples. It is by actions such as this, my friends, that your food and drugs are safeguarded by the enforcement of the Federal Food and Drugs Act.

Now, for my read-the-label information. My subject likewise will be apples. How do you, Mr. and Mrs. Consumer buy apples? Do you say to your grocer, send me a peck of apples? Or do you go to the grocery store and say, give me a basket of those apples, to which you point? I am going to tell you today the advantage to you in buying apples by varietal name and by grade. In the wholesale trade, apples are practically always bought and sold on the basis of values represented by the relative desirability of the product from a quality standpoint and this means on the basis of grades, condition, and varieties, for, my friends, McIntosh variety of apples is as much superior to Gano variety of apples as a silk gown is to a cotton one, and so also is the Delicious variety as much superior to the Ben Davis variety..

The requirements for U. S. Fancy apples are higher than for U. S. No. 1 apples, and those for U. S. No. 1 are higher than for U. S. Commercial apples. In view of these facts, can you not see how important it is that you buy apples by variety and grade and that you know the varietal and grade characteristics of the apples you are buying.

The United States Department of Agriculture through its Bureau of Agricultural Economics, has established definite grades for apples when packed in containers other than the standard Northwestern apple box. The purpose of the establishment of grades for apples, as is true when grades are established for other products, is to give a practical basis on which purchases can be made with complete understanding of the quality of the product to be delivered. The use of grades is almost always taken advantage of by dealers in their transactions, consequently, my friends, why isn't it your privilege and your obligation as the buyer for your family to use the same precautions and diligence in representing your family exchequer faithfully.

There are six United States grades for apples, namely, (1) U. S. FANCY, (2) U. S. NO. 1, (3) U. S. NO. 1 EARLY, (4) U. S. COMMERCIAL, (5) U. S. UTILITY, and (6) U. S. UTILITY EARLY.

U. S. Fancy apples must consist of apples of one variety which are mature but not overripe, carefully hand picked, clean, well formed, free from decay, broken skins, and bruises, free from spray burn, stings, or other insect injury, disease, sun scald, and visible water core. These apples must also be free from injury due to russetting, limb rubs, hail, or mechanical or other means, and each apple must have the amount of color which is specified for each variety and which runs, in general, from 25% to 50% normal attractive color. In order to allow for variation incident to proper grading and handling not more than 10% by weight of the apples in any container of this grade may be below the requirements of the grade but not to exceed one-half of this tolerance or 5% shall be allowed for defects causing serious damage and not more than 1% shall be allowed for decay.

U. S. NO. 1 apples differ from U. S. Fancy apples in that they need to be only fairly well shaped, whereas fancy apples must be well shaped. U. S. No. 1 apples are required to be free from damage caused by the various conditions named, whereas U. S. Fancy apples are required to be free from injury only. Damage here means defects materially affecting the appearance. Injury means a less serious defect. The color requirements for Grade No. 1 are about one-half as strict as for U. S. Fancy grade. The variations or tolerances allowed are very slightly more liberal for U. S. Grade No. 1 than for Fancy Grades.

U. S. NO. 1 EARLY is provided for early varieties which may have no red color and which may not be mature but which meet all other requirements for U. S. No. 1 grade. Such apples are often used for cooking purposes rather than for eating out of hand.

U. S. COMMERCIAL apples are required to consist of apples of one variety which meet the requirements of U. S. Grade No. 1, except for color. This grade is provided for apples which are mature but which do not have

sufficient color to meet the specifications of U. S. Grade No. 1.

U. S. UTILITY apples are required to consist of apples of one variety which are mature but not over-ripe and which are not seriously deformed. This grade differs from the U. S. No. 1 Grade in that the U. S. Utility grade requires freedom only from serious damage, note the word serious, resulting from any cause, and there are no color requirements for the Utility grade.

U. S. UTILITY EARLY is provided for early varieties which may not be mature but which meet all other requirements for U. S. Utility grade. Combinations of these grades are also allowed and when two grades are packed in one package the word "combination" may be stamped on the package before the grade designation. A combination grade must contain at least 50% of apples of the highest grade in the combination.

When sold as graded apples under any of these grade names the containers must be plainly stamped not only with the grade name but also with the minimum size of the apples in terms of inches and fractions thereof, representing the transverse diameter of the apple taking it at right angles to a line running from the stem to the blossom end. In other words, we may have U. S. Fancy apples, minimum size 2-1/2 inches, U. S. No. 1 apples, minimum size 2-1/2 inches, U. S. Commercial apples, minimum size 2-1/2 inches and U. S. Utility apples minimum size, 2-1/2 inches. There is no minimum size requirement for the various grades, but in all cases the minimum size shall be plainly marked on the packages.

Apples not graded are known as Unclassified Apples.

A great many of the States, have apple grading laws: For example, New York State and Virginia have adopted the U. S. Grade specifications as official for their States.

Massachusetts calls its grades for apples, Mass. Fancy Grade, Mass. A Grade, Mass. B Grade, and Mass. Ungraded. The requirements in Massachusetts for corresponding grades do not differ greatly from the Federal requirements.

In Maine the grade names are Maine Standard Fancy Grade, Maine Standard A Grade, Maine Commercial, Maine Standard B Grade, and Maine Unclassified Grade.

In Michigan the grades for apples are defined under names as: Michigan Fancy Grade, Michigan A Grade, Michigan Uniform A Grade, Michigan B Grade, and Michigan Commercial Grade.

Each of the Northwestern States has established grades for apples which are known as Extra Fancy, Fancy and C grades. Combinations of these grades are permitted with appropriate label designations.

For the grade designations and grade requirements in your particular State, inquire of your Department of Agriculture. From a grade standpoint alone, Fancy apples are worth more money than No. 1 apples, No. 1 apples are worth more than the Commercial grade of apples, and Commercial Grade apples are worth more than Utility Grade apples. Generally, unclassified apples may be inferior in grade to any of the above, although this is not necessarily true. Now, my friends, can you not see that you should know the grade of apples, you are buying, that you should read labels to determine what grade you are getting when you pay your money for apples.

Now the careful label reader must remember that apples are usually branded and packed in the fall of the year and there may be subsequent deterioration. Decay, scald, internal breakdown, freezing, Jonathan spot, bitter pit and other condition factors may develop after packing. This deterioration may take place in storage, transit or while waiting to be sold on display in the retail stores. It is for this reason that you must, if you are a careful buyer, examine your purchases of apples for condition.

I have said that the variety of apples is a consideration which should influence you in making your purchase. I do not mean that you need to buy the best variety always because most of the varieties of apples serve a very useful purpose in the diet, but depending upon the use to which you wish to put them, you may make your selections. If you intend your purchase for eating raw, then you will wish to buy one of the varieties on the market which suits your taste and the variety purchased need not be the best eating variety, according to the consensus of opinion, but if you do not get the best variety, then you should not pay the price of the best variety. On the other hand, if you intend to use the product for cooking, there is no reason why you should buy the best eating apples for this purpose, when a cheaper variety will serve the cooking purpose just as well and sometimes even better, because the best eating apples do not always cook well. If I may be understood, my advice is to know the variety of apple you are buying, to know its relative desirability from an eating or cooking quality standpoint, to know the relative price which you should pay for the variety of your choice. It will be impossible for me in my limited time to describe all of the hundreds of varieties of apples and their characteristics, relative qualities, and relative prices. There are 56 well known varieties, and the variety considered the best is a matter of taste. I may say, however, that with respect to eastern apples, the McIntosh, Northern Spy, Albemarle Pippin, Stayman's Winesap and the Greening are considered desirable and often the price of these varieties grade slightly down from the price of the McIntosh. With respect to box apples, or western apples, the Delicious variety, Jonathan, Winesap and Newtown Pippin are considered popular and often sell at prices which grade slightly down from that asked for the Delicious variety. Other varieties of good eating quality are Grimes Golden, Spitzenburg, the apple more suited to different tastes than any other apple, Maiden Blush, Baldwin, Red Astrachan, Northern Spy, Gravenstein, Winter Banana, Arkansas Black, the most beautiful of all apples, Rome Beauty, Golden Russet and Smokehouse. Apples such as

York Imperial, Gano, Ben Davis, have poorer eating qualities but they keep well and they come to use usually at times when other varieties are scarce. Among the best cooking apples are varieties known as York Imperials, Gravenstein, Northern Spy, Rhode Island, Greening, one of the best for cooking, Maiden Blush, Twenty-Ounce, Wealthy, Hubbardston, Limbertwig and Winesap. In general, the acid or sub-acid-apples are best for cooking.

You will find, in general, the varietal name stamped on the container and you should ask your dealer to let you see the stamp on the package from which he delivers your purchase.

Apples are packed in barrels, baskets, and boxes. The barrels are required by Federal statute to be of a definite size, and to contain 7,056 cubic inches, just slightly over 3-1/4 bushels. The standard one bushel basket contains 2,150 cubic inches. Western apples are almost always packed in boxes or bushel baskets. The Northwestern standard apple box is 18 inches by 11-1/2 inches by 10-1/2 inches, inside measurements giving it a cubic content of 2,174 cubic inches. Occasionally apples are packed in cartons. The quantity of contents in terms of "one barrel", or fraction thereof with respect to half barrels, or with respect to boxes, or with respect to small containers in terms of count, must appear on the outside of the package for you to see the quantity received, if you buy an original package. On the other hand, you may buy quantities in bulk, either by weight or measure.

My friends, I am trying my level best to be really of constructive help to you. I am trying to tell you how to read labels in order that you may become discriminating, careful and economical buyers, in order that you may know what you get, in order that you may get what you want, and in order that you may pay only the price you should pay for the article delivered. I have covered a wide variety of subjects in this series of talks, every one of which should be of vital interest to every housewife in the Nation. I have told you how to read labels on tea, many canned products, cheese, vinegar, lard, oysters, baking powders, eggs, butter and many more. I have told you about vitamins, food elements, essential in the diet, I have talked on drug products, including anti-fat preparations, and copies of all of these talks are available to you for the asking.

Write to W.R.M. WHARTON, United States Department of Agriculture, 201 Varick Street, New York City.